

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-14 and 16-19 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 11 are amended, and claim 15 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance, for the reasons discussed herein; (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration, since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter; (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal, if necessary. Entry is thus requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claim 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The allowable subject matter of claim 15 has been added to each of independent claims 1 and 11. Accordingly, claims 1 and 11 should be in condition for allowance along with claims 2-4, 6-10, 12-14, and 16-19, which depend respectfully therefrom.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-4, 6-14, and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitchell et al. (hereinafter "Mitchell"), U.S. Patent No. 5,272,327 in view of

Serial No. 09/972,876
Reply to Office Action dated March 10, 2004

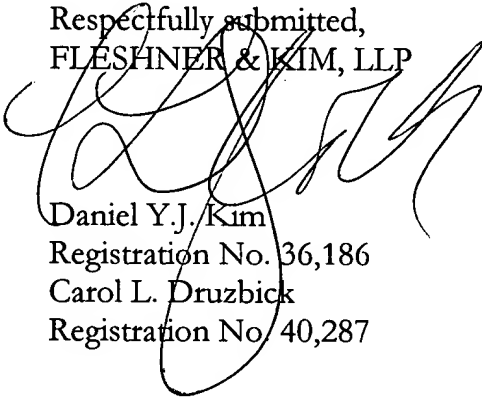
Docket No. P-0269

Cortopassi, U.S. Patent No. 5,996,082. The rejection is moot in view of the amendments discussed above, and therefore should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, **Carol L. Druzbeck**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
FLESHNER & KIM, LLP



Daniel Y.J. Kim
Registration No. 36,186
Carol L. Druzbeck
Registration No. 40,287

P.O. Box 221200
Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1200
703 766-3701 DYK:CLD/kah
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Please direct all correspondence to Customer Number 34610